

THE  
PROCEEDINGS  
OF  
HIS MAJESTIES Justices of Peace,  
At the SESSIONS of

Oyer and Terminer;

Held at *Hicks's-Hall*, September the 6th, 1684. for the  
Tryal of the Constables, &c. of the Hamlets of *Spittle-  
Fields*, and *Betnal-Green*.

Midd.fl. *Ad Sessionem Oier & Terminer tent' pro Com'  
Midd' per adjorn: apud Hicks-hall in St. Johns Street,  
in Com' præd' die Sabbati, sexto die Septembris, Anno  
Regni Dom' nostr' Caroli secundi, Dei Gratia, An-  
glie, Scotie, Francie, & Hibernie, Regis, Fidei defen-  
sor' &c. Tricesimo sexto, coram Will. Smith Ba-  
ronetto, Rich. Downton Milite, Johan. Berry  
Milite, Thom. Rowe, Thom. Harriot, Armigeris, ac  
aliis sociis suis Justic. dicti Dom' Regis, &c. ibidem.*

IT is thought fit, and ordered by this Court, That a brief  
account of the Inducement to the proceedings, and of the  
proceedings against the Parish-Officers hereafter named, at  
the Sessions of *Oier & Terminer*, be published and Printed,  
as followeth.

That the Tower-Hamlets consist of Nineteen Parishes and Ham-  
lets; which Hamlets are as numerous as most Parishes in *England*.

That the people for the most part consist of Weavers, and  
other Manufacturers, and of Sea-men, Water-men, and such who  
relate to Shipping and Sea-service; and are generally very Fa-  
ctious and Poor.

That

That there were about Sixteen great and publick Conventicles within the said Hamlets, and Houses built for them as big as most Churches; and fitted up with Pews and Pulpits, as Churches.

That the Justices of Peace of *Middlesex*, living in the said Tower-hamlets, could never prevail with the Constables and Parish-Officers to suppress the said Conventicles; nor during the time of the *Ignoramus Juries*, could invent any way to suppress them; in regard, that if any Fine had been laid upon any of the Hearers or Preachers, above Ten shillings, there lay an Appeal, which was to have been tryed by a Jury, which would certainly have gone against the conviction of the Justices; and thereby the Justices would have been Derided, the Government Baffled, and those Factious persons who frequented those Conventicles, made more Insolent and Rebellious.

That as soon as there were Loyal Sheriffs of *Middlesex*, and consequently hopes of good Juries, the Justices went in person, and did in a little time suppress those publick and bold Conventicles.

That the said Justices were forced, to their great trouble and charges, to keep frequent Sessions in the Tower-Hamlets for the preservation of the peace; without which, in all probability, the Factious people there in those times, had got into Rebellion, being ripe for it.

That notwithstanding this Care of the Justices, and altho, the publick Conventicles were suppressed, yet the Factious people got together in great numbers in private Houses, and held Conventicles there, and those in great numbers; of which none of the Parish-Officers would make any discovery, nor execute any of the Justices Warrants to that purpose; which did enforce the Justices to employ strangers in that Service, and by them the Justices have had intelligence where those Conventicles have been kept, and have been forced to repair to the places themselves to suppress them, not daring to trust any Parish-Officers; which was so great a trouble and toil to the Justices, that they did resolve to keep a Sessions in every Parish and Hamlet, to the intent they might make a full enquiry into all places, and a perfect discovery of those Factious and Rebellious persons, who contemned all Authority; and this they were more inclined to do, because they did apprehend, that some of those Traitors and Miscreants, who were in the late Horrid Plot for the Murther of His Majesty, and His Royal Brother, might lurk in some of those

those places ; And therefore sent out their Warrants to the High-Constable, requiring him to issue forth his Warrant to the Officers of the several Parishes and Hamlets, to give notice of a Sessions, and to require them to bring in a List to that Sessions of the Inhabitants, House-keepers, and Inmates, to the intent a discovery might be made what they were, and who they were who did disturb the Government, and would not conform to the Laws ; And to their great charge and trouble, the Justices went through most of the Parishes and Hamlets, and kept Sessions ; at last they came to the Hamlet of *Spittle-fields*, and there on the thirtieth day of *July*, *Sir William Smith* Baronet, *Sir John Berry* Knight, *Charles Osborne* Esq; *Arnold Brown* Esq; and *Abraham Bayly* Esq; Justices of the Peace, Living in the Tower-hamlets, held a Sessions, to which the Parish-Officers were summoned, to give an account upon Oath of the Inhabitants, House-keepers, and Inmates, within that Hamlet, which is the most Factious Hamlet of all the Tower-Division, having had many Conventicles in it, which it still hath ; and which the Justices could never prevail with the Parish-Officers to suppress or Discover ; and being then required to take an Oath to that end, they being Fifteen in number, unanimously refused (to the great contempt of Authority, and the disappointing the Justices of that discovery they hoped to have made there ; for which contempt the Justices demanded of them to find Sureties to appear at the General Sessions, to answer the Contempt ; and in the mean time to be of the Good Behaviour, which they likewise unanimously refused to do ; for which the Justices committed them to his Majesties Gaol of New-Prison, and as they went out of the Court, in great scorn they bid the Justices look to the Poor ; and the very next day, the poor in great numbers, in a Mutinous and Rebellious way, came to the Houses of *Sir William Smith*, *Sir John Berry*, and *Arnold Brown*, to demand money of them, and likewise to the Minister of the Parish of *Stepney*, and threatned they would come a great multitude of them on Sunday to the Church, to demand Relief there ; and did declare they were encouraged to this mutinous proceeding, by the instigation of some of those Officers in prison. Which practice might have had an ill consequence, if by the Justices Care it had not been prevented. That the said Officers continued in Prison about three weeks, and did not apply to any of the Justices of the Peace to be Bailed ; but stayed until one of His Majesties Judges of the Kings Bench came  
from



from the Circuit, and then put in Bayl before him to appear at this General Sessions; where by a Commission of *Oier* and *Termi-ner* they were tryed, and upon a full hearing of the King's Council, and of the Parties and their Council, they were found Guilty, and Judgment given against them, as followeth, *viz.* *Edward Binns* fined an Hundred pounds, *John Cartwright* an hundred pounds, *David Waine* an hundred pounds, *Roland Trion*, *Christopher Tooley*, *William Cowley*, *John Hilton*, *Richard Skingley*, *Laurence Culliford*, *Samuel Winnet*, Fifty pounds a piece; *William Sumner*, *John Newit*, and *John Miller*, who confessed the said Indictment, Five marks a piece; *George Henwood* thirteen shillings and four pence; and all committed to New-Prison, until they have paid their said Fines; and *John Child*, the Head Beadle of the said *Spittle-fields*, to be set Twice in the Pillory.

That for the same Offence, Five other Officers of the Hamlet of *Bethnal-Green*, had Judgment given against them as followeth, *viz.* *James Pittman*, who would not Plead or Answer to the Indictment, hath Judgment given against him by *Nihil dicit*, is fined Two hundred pounds; *William Malin*, *Richard Stratford*, and *William Palmer*, who confessed the Indictment, are fined five marks a piece, and all committed to New-Prison, until they have paid their respective Fines; *Samuel Wheeler*, Beadle of *Bethnal-Green*, to be set Once in the Pillory.

That if Exemplary Justice had not been done upon these Offenders, neither Justices of Peace, nor any other Officers His Majesty should have employed in those Hamlets, would have been able to have done any Service for the preservation of the Peace, and suppressing these Tumultuous Meetings, and Riotous Assemblies, but they would have been in danger to have been knocked o'th' head by the Mobile.

Per Cur<sup>o</sup>

S M I T H.

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L O N D O N:

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